

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REQUEST FORM

Today's date: 09 / 21 / 18

Date of meeting 10 / 03 / 18

(City Council meetings are held the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.)

Name of Citizen, Organization, Elected Official, or Department Head making request:

Kim, Parks and Rec

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number and email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized by: Kim

name of City official

[Signature]  
City official's signature

(Department Heads, City Council members, and the Mayor are City officials.)

Subject: Goose Management Plan

Summary of what is being requested: Review of proposed plan and related discussion.

The following information **MUST** be completed before submitting your request to the City Clerk:

1. Would there be any financial impact to the city? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, in what way? Most of the proposed goose management options come with an associated

cost. Exact costs will be determined by chosen path of action. We have \$5,000 budgeted in FY19

2. Name(s) of any individual(s) or group(s) that will be directly affected by this action:

Have they been contacted?  
Yes or No

Sandpoint Parks and Rec Commission

yes

3. Is there a need for a general public information or public involvement plan? Yes or No

If yes, please specify and suggest a method to accomplish the plan: ☒ Yes ☐ No

The proposed plan has had the input and recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Council workshop in another opportunity to glean Community input.

4. Is an enforcement plan needed? Yes or No ☐ Yes ☒ No

Additional funds needed? Yes or No ☐ Yes ☒ No

5. Have all the affected departments been informed about this agenda item? Yes or No ☒ Yes ☐ No

**This form must be submitted no later than 6 working days prior to the scheduled meeting. All pertinent paperwork to be distributed to City Council must be attached.**

**ITEMS WILL NOT BE AGENDIZED WITHOUT THIS FORM**

**CITY OF SANDPOINT  
AGENDA REPORT**

**DATE: 9/25/2018**

**TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: Kim, Parks and Rec**

**SUBJECT: Canada Goose Policy**


**DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**  
Please see attached Memo and Policy

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**  
For Council discussion and direction

**ACTION:**  
For Council discussion and direction

**WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? Yes   HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? Yes**

**ATTACHMENTS:**  
Please see attached Memo and Policy

**To:** City Council  
**From:** Kim, Parks and Rec   
**cc:**  
**Date:** 9/24/2018  
**Re:** Geese Management Plan

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With input and guidance from the Parks and Recreation Commission, a general geese management plan is presented for your consideration. The Policy outlines both non-lethal control techniques (several which have been tried) and goose capture / physical control methods. This plan is a first step in a more detailed strategy.

Because Canada geese are Federally protected, control measures beyond simple harassment are determined by three agencies; two Federal and one State. Federal agencies are the USDA Wildlife Services (WS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The State agency is Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG). Of the three WS is specifically tasked with providing assistance in dealing with conflicts between people and wildlife and will be our primary contact.

Idaho WS Director Todd Grimm has offered to coordinate a meeting with WS, IDFG, and City to guide us through the process. Specifically, I will explore the option of entering a cooperative service field agreement with WS for capture / physical control methods. In this partnership a financial commitment will be expected. I do not expect that commitment to exceed the \$5,000 budgeted this fiscal year.



## **1.0 CANADA GOOSE BENEFITS AND CONFLICTS**

Canada geese are included on a long list of wildlife that offers many benefits to humans yet can also cause significant conflict with humans. It is important to recognize that both positive and negative values can exist, and appropriate management can keep goose numbers in accord with human activities.

### **1.1 BENEFITS OF CANADA GEESE**

Canada geese are enjoyed by many and considered an area icon to some. The presence of wildlife indicates a healthy environment and ecosystem, which is also of value to the public. In rural areas goose hunting provides recreational opportunities.

### **1.2 SPECIFIC CONFLICTS WITH CANADA GEESE**

Conflicts with Canada geese involve the unaesthetic and unpleasant nature of goose feces, possible health concerns over the feces, landscape damage caused by excessive goose feeding, and aggressiveness of Canada geese toward humans.

#### **1.2.1 DISEASE RISKS**

Research has shown goose populations, in general, to commonly carry pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Campylobacter*. *E. coli* exists in many strains, some dangerous to humans and some not. Humans can also develop "swimmers itch" when swimming in goose-occupied waters, and other stomach illnesses and skin irritations are known to occur when humans contact goose feces. Swimmers itch is caused by a parasite that utilizes geese as hosts. It results in a short term immune reaction that causes mildly itchy spots to form on the skin.

This analysis of disease risk should not be used to stir panic. However, there certainly exists potential for human health issues to arise from coming in contact with goose feces. Summer is the season when pathogens are most prevalent. This is also the season when most humans will interact with geese.

#### **1.2.2 AESTHETIC DETERIORATION**

With or without disease risk, most park users consider goose feces unsightly and in conflict with other recreational uses of the park. Goose feces affects activities ranging from picnicking to "playing catch". Canada geese also shed their primary feathers once yearly, and when this occurs in late May and June, these feathers can be unaesthetic and discourage the use of parks by the public. The City of Sandpoint spends thousands of dollars annually for labor and equipment to remove goose feces and/or feathers from local parks.

#### **1.2.3 LANDSCAPE DAMAGE**

Canada geese become persistent at foraging in certain areas of a park. This persistent feeding behavior results in landscape damage that often requires significant re-seeding of lawn areas. Seed is difficult to get established because the geese feed on new grass growth and disturb the loose soil. Open areas are also prone to weeds, and when areas become de-vegetated; they are more prone to erosion and above-ground water runoff.



#### **1.2.4 AGGRESSIVENESS/DANGER TOWARDS HUMANS**

When Canada geese are nesting or rearing goslings, they can be especially aggressive towards perceived threats. This "fight-or-flight" instinct can cause humans, especially children, to be fearful of Canada geese when the geese choose to fight. Normally, this aggressiveness is an attempt to scare humans or other potential dangers away from goslings, but occasionally humans are "flogged" by goose wings and/or pecked at by the geese.

## **2.0 GENERAL CANADA GOOSE DAMAGE CONTROL OPTIONS**

There are many options for Canada goose damage management in many different settings. The inherent problem with controlling Canada geese is that they are very difficult to disperse away from conflict sites. Canada geese develop a strong affinity to specific sites, and they can be prolific. Some damage management methods are more suitable to particular sites than others due to practicality and efficacy.

### **2.1 NON-LETHAL CONTROL TECHNIQUES**

Following is a list of available non-lethal Canada goose control methods, with associated information as to efficacy, practicality, and social impacts:

- Physical Harassment- This method would typically involve park staff herding the geese. Repeated harassment, in theory, will cause the geese to move to areas in which they are not harassed. This method can draw attention from the public and might be looked upon negatively. It also required committing substantial staffing.
- Lights and Lasers- Several goose harassment tools involve the use of lights and lasers. A variety of lights and lasers have been shown to disperse geese. Many of the devices used are improvised, although some, like the barricade flashers, are available to purchase. Newer technology using lasers has shown some success in moving geese, especially for nighttime roost dispersal. One handheld laser device casts a green or red laser where geese may be roosting or loafing in the darkness. These units can cost over \$1,000 to purchase, and success of using the device is inconsistent. These lasers work at night or low light conditions, and are primarily designed to disperse birds from roosting or loafing sites. Other lights have shown to be mostly ineffective, especially as a long-term tool.
- Flags, Mylar Tape, and Balloons- Flagging, mylar flash tape, and scare-eye balloons can sometimes cause geese to move from areas. Although these methods are inexpensive, they typically only yield short-term relief.
- Other Physical Harassment Devices- Paintball guns, rubber buckshot, remote-controlled toy boats, toy helicopters / airplanes, and water guns have been used with success to haze Canada geese. The benefit of using these methods is that geese feel or see a negatively-reinforcing stimulus, and this can yield increased results for scaring geese from areas. Geese habituated to a site will not respond as well to these hazing devices. Paint ball use can result in geese being painted odd colors, which should be avoided. Clear paintballs are available and are recommended.



- **Repellents-** Multiple repellent products exist that repel geese from foraging areas. Many of these repellents incorporate the chemical known as Methyl Anthranilate, which is a grape flavored food additive. The repellent is applied to grass that geese feed on. The idea is that if grass in an area is not palatable, the geese will leave that area and find a location where the forage is more palatable. Although sometimes effective, rain and irrigation will wash the product from the grass blades. Also, blade growth can outgrow treated blade surfaces, reducing effectiveness. Even under ideal conditions, regular application is necessary. *For these reasons, success of these products is inconsistent. The products are also relatively expensive.*

- **Dogs-** The City of Sandpoint has used dogs to haze geese with varying success. Most hazing dogs will not swim, and geese merely seek water for refuge. When the dogs leave, geese will often return to the lawn.

- **Habitat Management-** Goose numbers can be reduced from sites by changing landscaping and habitat features. Walls between water and lawn areas can inhibit the ability of geese to walk into and out of feeding areas. Brush rows between areas of water and grass can yield the same results. In addition to brush rows acting as a barrier, they also reduce the geese's ability to detect predators. Geese prefer open grassy areas where they can detect predators at great distances. Therefore, plantings of shrubs that break up sight lines along expanses of lawn areas may reduce goose use. *Habitat management can be quite expensive and sometimes impractical if it conflicts with other desired uses of the area (Beach recreation). Where practical, habitat management can be effective in reducing long-term goose use.*

- **Egg Addling/Oiling-** Addling or oiling (with corn oil) of eggs prevents the embryo from developing. This method is considered by humane standards as being a non-lethal method. Addling or oiling of eggs is preferred over egg destruction because geese will commonly re-nest if their eggs are destroyed early in egg development. This method is highly effective at reducing recruitment of goslings, *but one must find and have access to the goose nests.* It is recommended that approximately three weeks after the eggs have been addled/oiled, the nest be revisited and the nest and eggs destroyed. Egg oiling and addling is conducted under permit issued by USFWS.

## **2.2 GOOSE CAPTURE / PHYSICAL CONTROL METHODS**

*When geese become acclimated to certain locations, the only option for effective control is often the removal of geese.* The removal of geese can enhance harassment and deterrent methods for remaining geese as well as newcomers. Removal of geese via capture can be either lethal or non-lethal. *Due to high populations of Canada geese and associated damage complaints, relocation of geese is not ideal in most situations. Adult geese also tend to return to their original capture site, even when they are moved hundreds of miles away.* Juvenile geese are less likely to have imprinted on a particular area and thus tend to stay at a relocation site. Capture / physical control methods conducted under permit issued by USFWS.



Following is a list of goose capture methods:

o Funnel Traps- Once a year, Canada geese lose their flight feathers and grow new feathers in roughly one month. This loss of feathers is called molt which typically occurs in June. When this occurs, geese can be herded into drive trap pens. This method can raise public attention because of the noise and activity of the geese when penned. Therefore, some public relations issues may occur. Geese can be relocated or euthanized off site. This method is labor intensive due to the need for enough manpower to herd and surround the geese as well as load the geese into cages, etc. The public generally is receptive to this method because the geese can be utilized for human consumption.

o Alpha-Chloralose- Alpha Chloralose (AC) is an avian drug used in waterfowl capture. The drug is administered in treated bread baits or on whole corn. The geese are anesthetized 20-45 minutes following ingestion of the treated bait. They can be relocated or euthanized, but they cannot be recovered for human consumption due to drug residues in the bird's tissues. AC is a flexible tool that can be used in many situations. The advantage of this tool is that it can potentially be used at any time of the year. Another advantage of AC is that it allows the user to remove a few geese at a time. Setting up a funnel trap to capture geese is too labor intensive for a small number of geese, but baiting a few bread baits is quick and easy. Few problems with public relations occur with the use of this drug capture method, as this method typically draws less attention than funnel trapping. AC regulations state that the drug cannot be used to capture birds of a huntable population during or 30 days prior to a legal hunting season. AC should only be used by personnel that are certified AC applicators.

o Shooting- Shooting is an effective method for controlling geese. Safety is a top priority when using firearms. Geese removed using this method can be recovered for human consumption.

o Netting/Net Gun/Rocket Nets- Canada geese can be netted in certain situations using hand-held nets and/or air cannon nets to capture geese. The cannon net is set up in an appropriate area and geese are baited in front of the net. The net is fired remotely and compressed air sends the net over the geese. This method can receive a fair amount of public attention and requires cages to relocate or euthanize the geese off site. Geese captured using this method can be recovered for human consumption.